

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

The first attached drawing sheet reflects changes to the originally-filed drawing sheet, although solely to amend sheet numbering from “SHEET 1 OF 1” to “SHEET 1 OF 2.” This sheet, which includes Figs. 1 and 2, replaces the original sheet that included Figs. 1 and 2.

The second attached drawing sheet (“SHEET 2 OF 2”) is an additional sheet. This sheet, which includes Fig. 3, shows “the patterning, the heating, the forming a mask and the etching,” as requested by the Examiner. No new matter has been submitted, because Fig. 3 merely depicts that subject matter which already exists in the Detailed Description and/or one or more of the originally-filed claims of the present application.

Attachments:        Replacement Sheet  
                         New Sheet

**REMARKS**

In the specification, the Title has been amended, and paragraphs [0010] and [0021] have also been amended.

In the drawings, Fig. 3 has been added via new drawing Sheet 2, and the sole drawing sheet that was originally filed in the present application has been renumbered to reflect the additional drawing sheet.

Claims 1-27 were originally filed in the present application. No claims are currently canceled or added. Thus, claims 1-27 are currently pending in the present application.

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102: Sekine**

**Claim 1**

Claim 1 recites:

1. A microlens device, comprising:
  - a substrate having a first photo sensor and a second photo sensor located therein;
  - a dielectric layer located over the substrate;
  - a first microlens located over the dielectric layer and including a first substantially convex portion substantially aligned over the first photo sensor;
  - a second microlens located over the dielectric layer and including a second substantially convex portion substantially aligned over the second photo sensor, wherein the first and second microlenses are laterally separated by a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of the dielectric layer;
  - a dielectric film located over and conforming to the first microlens and the second microlens, the dielectric film also contacting the portion of the dielectric layer surface that is exposed in the gap; and
  - a protective layer located over the dielectric film.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0051405 to Sekine ("Sekine").

The PTO provides in MPEP §2131 that:

*"[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...."*

Therefore, to sustain this rejection with respect to claim 1, Sekine must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, Sekine does not disclose a first microlens separated from a second microlens by a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of a dielectric layer over which the first and second microlenses are located. Sekine also does not disclose a dielectric film located over the first and second microlenses and contacting the exposed portion of the dielectric layer surface in the gap separating the first and second microlenses.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 1 is not supported by the Sekine reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(b) rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims.

#### Claim 10

Claim 10 recites:

10. A microlens array, comprising:  
a substrate having a plurality of photo sensors located therein;  
a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses located over the substrate, each of the plurality of microlenses including a substantially convex portion substantially aligned over a corresponding one of the plurality of photo sensors, wherein the plurality of microlenses are separated by a plurality of gaps; and  
a dielectric film located over and conforming to the microlens layer and substantially filling the plurality of gaps.

Claim 10 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sekine. To sustain this rejection, Sekine must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, Sekine does not disclose a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps.

Applicant respectfully notes that the Examiner refers to "12b" in alleging that Sekine discloses such gaps. However, Sekine includes no feature referenced by "12b." Moreover, the Examiner has provided no additional reference to any other feature disclosed in Sekine that can arguably be construed as a microlens-separating-gap in the context of the present application.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 10 is not supported by the Sekine reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(b) rejection of claim 10 and its dependent claims.

Claim 20

Claim 20 recites:

20. A method of manufacturing a microlens array, comprising:  
providing a substrate having a plurality of photo sensors located therein;  
forming a dielectric layer over the substrate, the dielectric layer having a surface opposite the substrate;  
forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses on the dielectric layer surface, each of the plurality of microlenses including a substantially convex portion substantially aligned over a corresponding one of the plurality of photo sensors, wherein the plurality of microlenses are separated by a plurality of gaps that each reveal a portion of the dielectric layer surface; and  
forming a dielectric film on the microlens layer and contacting the dielectric layer surface through each of the plurality of gaps.

Claim 20 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sekine. To sustain this rejection, Sekine must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, Sekine does not disclose forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps that each reveal a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 20 is not supported by the Sekine reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(b) rejection of claim 20 and its dependent claims.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102: Izumi**

**Claim 1**

Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0033640 to Izumi ("Izumi"). As described above, to sustain this rejection with respect to claim 1, Izumi must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

However, Izumi does not disclose a first microlens separated from a second microlens by a gap. In contrast, the microlens elements 11a in Izumi are connected by flat portions 11b of the SiN film 11 from which the elements 11a and portions 11b are defined. Thus, the microlens elements 11a are not separated by a gap.

Moreover, Izumi does not disclose a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of a dielectric layer over which first and second microlenses are located. In contrast, Izumi discloses a dielectric layer 10 over which microlens elements 11a and flat portions 11b are located, but the dielectric layer 10 is completely covered by the elements 11a and portions 11b. Thus, no portion of the dielectric layer 10 is exposed through gaps separating the microlens elements 11a.

Consequently, Izumi also does not disclose a dielectric film located over first and second microlenses and contacting a portion of a surface of an underlying dielectric layer that is exposed through a gap separating the first and second microlenses. In contrast, Izumi merely teaches that the SiN film 12 only contacts the microlens elements 11a and flat portions 11b, such that the SiN film 12 is physically isolated from the dielectric layer 10 by the elements 11a and portions 11b. Thus, no portion of the SiN film 12 contacts a portion of the dielectric layer 10 through a gap between microlens elements 11a.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 1 is not supported by the Izumi reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(e) rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims.

**Claim 10**

Claim 10 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Izumi. To sustain this rejection, Izumi must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, Izumi does not disclose a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps. In contrast, as described above, the microlens elements 11a in Izumi are connected by the flat portions 11b. Thus, the microlens elements 11a are not separated by gaps.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 10 is not supported by the Izumi reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(e) rejection of claim 10 and its dependent claims.

Claim 20

Claim 20 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Izumi. To sustain this rejection, Izumi must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

However, as described above, Izumi does not disclose forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps. That is, each neighboring pair of microlens elements 11a in Izumi are connected by a flat portion 11b of the SiN film 11 from which the elements 11a and portions 11b are defined. Thus, the microlens elements 11a are not separated, whether by gaps or otherwise.

Moreover, Izumi does not disclose that forming a plurality of microlenses includes forming a plurality of gaps each revealing a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer. In contrast, Izumi discloses a dielectric layer 10 over which microlens elements 11a and flat portions 11b are located, but the dielectric layer 10 is completely covered by the elements 11a and portions 11b. Thus, no portion of the dielectric layer 10 is exposed through gaps separating the microlens elements 11a.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 20 is not supported by the Izumi reference. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §102(e) rejection of claim 20 and its dependent claims.

**Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103: Izumi in view of Abramovich**

Claim 1

Claim 8, which depends from claim 1, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Izumi in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,221,687 to Abramovich ("Abramovich"). Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 1.

As the PTO recognizes in MPEP § 2142:

*... The Examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting any prima facie conclusion of obviousness. If the Examiner does not produce a prima facie case, the Applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness...*

It is submitted that, in the present case, the Examiner has not factually supported a *prima facie* case of obviousness for the following mutually exclusive reasons.

**1. Even when combined, the references do not teach the claimed subject matter**

As provided in 35 U.S.C. §103:

*A patent may not be obtained ... if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains ... (Emphasis added)*

Thus, when evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches a first microlens separated from a second microlens by a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of a dielectric layer over which the first and second microlenses are located. Izumi and Abramovich also each fail to teach a dielectric film located over the first and second microlenses and contacting the exposed portion of the dielectric layer surface in the gap separating the first and second microlenses. Since, whether taken separately or together, Izumi and Abramovich fail to teach each and every element of claim 1, it is impossible for the combination of Izumi and Abramovich to render obvious the subject matter of claim 1, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 1 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 8.

**2. The combination of references is improper**

Assuming, arguendo, that the above argument for non-obviousness doesn't apply (which is clearly not the case based on the above), there is still another mutually exclusive and compelling reason why Izumi and Abramovich cannot be applied to reject claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103. The MPEP provides in §2142 that:

*...the Examiner must step backward in time and into the shoes worn by the hypothetical 'person of ordinary skill in the art' when the invention was unknown and just before it was made.....The Examiner must put aside knowledge of the Applicant's disclosure, refrain from using hindsight, and consider the subject matter claimed 'as a whole'.*

Here, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches, or even suggests, the desirability of the combination since neither teaches the specific arrangement and location of the dielectric layer, microlenses, and dielectric film as specified above and as recited in claim 1. Thus, it is clear that neither Izumi nor Abramovich provides any incentive or motivation supporting the desirability of combination. Therefore, there is simply no basis in the art for combining Izumi and Abramovich to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection of claim 1 or its dependent claims.

In this context, the MPEP further provides at §2143.01:

*The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination.*

In the above context, the courts have repeatedly held that, absent some teaching, suggestion or incentive supporting combination, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention. In the present case, it is clear that the Examiner's combination can arise solely from hindsight based on the invention, because there is no showing, suggestion, incentive or motivation in either Izumi or Abramovich for the combination as applied to claim 1. Therefore, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness clearly cannot be met with respect to claim 1. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 8.

#### Claim 10

Claim 18, which depends from claim 10, was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Izumi in view of Abramovich. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are also defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 10 for the following mutually exclusive reasons.



**1. Even when combined, the references do not teach the claimed subject matter**

As described above, when evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps. Since, whether taken separately or together, Izumi and Abramovich fail to teach each and every element of claim 10, it is impossible for the combination of Izumi and Abramovich to render obvious the subject matter of claim 10, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 10 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 18.

**2. The combination of references is improper**

Assuming, arguendo, that the above argument for non-obviousness doesn't apply (which is clearly not the case based on the above), there is still another mutually exclusive and compelling reason why Izumi and Abramovich cannot be applied to reject claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103. Again referring to MPEP §2142, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches, or even suggests, the desirability of the combination since neither teaches a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps as specified above and as recited in claim 10. Thus, it is clear that neither Izumi nor Abramovich provides any incentive or motivation supporting the desirability of combination. Therefore, there is simply no basis in the art for combining Izumi and Abramovich to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection of claim 10 or its dependent claims.

In this context, MPEP §2143.01 and the courts have repeatedly held that, absent some teaching, suggestion or incentive supporting combination, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention. In the present case, it is clear that the Examiner's combination can arise solely from hindsight based on the invention, because there is no showing, suggestion, incentive or motivation in either Izumi or Abramovich for the combination as applied to claim 10. Therefore, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness clearly cannot be met with respect to claim 10. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 18.

Claim 20

Claim 27, which depends from claim 20, was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Izumi in view of Abramovich. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are also defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 20 for the following mutually exclusive reasons.

**1. Even when combined, the references do not teach the claimed subject matter**

As described above, when evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps, or that forming a plurality of microlenses includes forming a plurality of gaps each revealing a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer. Since, whether taken separately or together, Izumi and Abramovich fail to teach each and every element of claim 20, it is impossible for the combination of Izumi and Abramovich to render obvious the subject matter of claim 20, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 20 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 27.

**2. The combination of references is improper**

Assuming, arguendo, that the above argument for non-obviousness doesn't apply (which is clearly not the case based on the above), there is still another mutually exclusive and compelling reason why Izumi and Abramovich cannot be applied to reject claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103. Again referring to MPEP §2142, neither Izumi nor Abramovich teaches, or even suggests, the desirability of the combination since neither teaches forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps, or that forming a plurality of microlenses includes forming a plurality of gaps each revealing a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer, as specified above and as recited in claim 20. Thus, it is clear that neither Izumi nor Abramovich provides any incentive or motivation supporting the desirability of combination. Therefore, there is simply no basis in the art for combining Izumi and Abramovich to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection of claim 20 or its dependent claims.

In this context, MPEP §2143.01 and the courts have repeatedly held that, absent some teaching, suggestion or incentive supporting combination, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention. In the present case, it is clear that the Examiner's combination can arise solely from hindsight based on the invention, because there is no showing, suggestion, incentive or motivation in either Izumi or Abramovich for the combination as applied to claim 20. Therefore, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness clearly cannot be met with respect to claim 20. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 27.

**Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103: Izumi or Sekine**

**Claim 1**

Claim 6, which depends from claim 1, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over either Izumi or Sekine. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 1, as described below.

When evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, neither Izumi nor Sekine teaches a first microlens separated from a second microlens by a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of a dielectric layer over which the first and second microlenses are located. Izumi and Sekine also each fail to teach a dielectric film located over the first and second microlenses and contacting the exposed portion of the dielectric layer surface in the gap separating the first and second microlenses. Since Izumi and Sekine each fail to teach every element of claim 1, it is impossible for either Izumi or Sekine to render obvious the subject matter of claim 1, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 1 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 6.

**Claim 10**

Claim 16, which depends from claim 10, was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over either Izumi or Sekine. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are also defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 10, as described below.

When evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, neither Izumi nor Sekine teaches a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps. Since Izumi and Sekine each fail to teach every element of claim 10, it is impossible for either Izumi or Sekine to render obvious the subject matter of claim 10, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 10 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 16.

### **Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103: Sekine**

#### **Claim 1**

Claim 5, which depends from claim 1, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sekine. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that Sekine is defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 1, as described below.

When evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, Sekine fails to teach a first microlens separated from a second microlens by a gap exposing a substantially planar surface of a dielectric layer over which the first and second microlenses are located. Sekine also fails to teach a dielectric film located over the first and second microlenses and contacting the exposed portion of the dielectric layer surface in the gap separating the first and second microlenses. Since Sekine fails to teach every element of claim 1, it is impossible for Sekine to render obvious the subject matter of claim 1, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 1 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 5.

#### **Claim 10**

Claim 15, which depends from claim 10, was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sekine. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that Sekine is also defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 10, as described below.

When evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, Sekine fails to teach a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps. Since Sekine fails to teach every element of claim 10, it is impossible for

Sekine to render obvious the subject matter of claim 10, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 10 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claim 15.

**Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103: Either Izumi or Sekine in view of Prior Art**

**Claim 20**

Claims 23-26, which depend from claim 20, were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over either Izumi or Sekine in view of Applicant's Prior Art. Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that these references are also defective in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 20 for the following mutually exclusive reasons.

**1. Even when combined, the references do not teach the claimed subject matter**

As described above, when evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. However, none of these references teach forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps, or that forming a plurality of microlenses includes forming a plurality of gaps each revealing a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer. Since, whether taken separately or together, these references fail to teach each and every element of claim 20, it is impossible for any combination of these references to render obvious the subject matter of claim 20, as a whole, and the explicit terms of §103 cannot be met.

Thus, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has clearly not been met with respect to claim 20 and, thus, its dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claims 23-26.

**2. The combination of references is improper**

Assuming, arguendo, that the above argument for non-obviousness doesn't apply (which is clearly not the case based on the above), there is still another mutually exclusive and compelling reason why these

references cannot be applied to reject claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103. Again referring to MPEP §2142, none of these references teach, or even suggest, the desirability of the combination since none teach forming a microlens layer comprising a plurality of microlenses separated by a plurality of gaps, or that forming a plurality of microlenses includes forming a plurality of gaps each revealing a portion of a surface of a previously-formed, underlying dielectric layer, as specified above and as recited in claim 20. Thus, it is clear that none of these references provide any incentive or motivation supporting the desirability of combination. Therefore, there is simply no basis in the art for combining any of these references to support a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection of claim 20 or its dependent claims.

In this context, MPEP §2143.01 and the courts have repeatedly held that, absent some teaching, suggestion or incentive supporting combination, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention. In the present case, it is clear that the Examiner's combination can arise solely from hindsight based on the invention, because there is no showing, suggestion, incentive or motivation in any of these references for the combination as applied to claim 20. Therefore, for this mutually exclusive reason, the Examiner's burden of factually supporting a *prima facie* case of obviousness clearly cannot be met with respect to claim 20. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the §103(a) rejection of claims 23-26.

**Conclusion**

It is clear from all of the foregoing that independent claims 1, 10, and 20 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 2-9, 11-19, and 21-27 depend from and further limit independent claims 1, 10, and 20 and, therefore, are allowable as well.

It is believed that all matters set forth in the Office Action have been addressed, and that claims 1-27 are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early indication of the allowability of the claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner deem that an interview with Applicant's undersigned attorney would expedite consideration, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: 1/20/06

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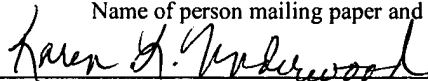
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